

ON THE EASTERN EUROPEAN SOCIAL FORMATION

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1. Introduction

The present paper is not an empirical effort to characterize, in concrete terms, Eastern European societies; rather it is a theoretical effort to come to grips with a more fundamental question: how to think about Eastern Europe. There are many reasons for doing so.

First, socialist Europe¹ is the habitat today of a sizeable part of humankind, around 400 million, or ten percent of world population. Most of this is made up by the fifteen republics of the Soviet Union - strictly speaking not Eastern Europe - but then there are the eight "real" Eastern European countries comprising all of Eastern and South-eastern Europe except for Greece and a tiny part of Turkey. It is surprising how few efforts there are to discuss seriously the future of these countries, possibly because neither the present, nor the past have been taken seriously enough. What are the goals of these countries, what are the processes, which are the indicators - leaving official rhetoric aside?

Second, and that is an effort to answer the question of why their future is not seriously discussed: because the countries have been the victims of inadequate theoretical paradigms. There is the marxist paradigm with its Stufengang, locating the societies on the feudalism-capitalism-socialism-communism ladder, sometimes on the rungs, sometimes in-between, with the Soviet Union as a transition society between socialism and communism, the others or some of them in the transition from (pre)-capitalism to socialism.² The sway of this paradigm is so powerful that very many people inside and outside, even anti-marxists, seem to take it

for granted that the societies will not backtrack in these terms, that they will "march forward" to a poorly defined communist society, and that this offers adequate understanding of past, present and future. And then there is a liberal paradigm, a deficit paradigm concerned with what is found in capitalist Europe, but not in socialist Europe, hence missing, hence necessarily also being missed - like human rights, free trade unions, elections with multi-party systems, certain goods and services, higher levels of efficiency, economic free enterprise officially recognized and legitimized. But whereas the marxist paradigm is official dogma from the top the liberal paradigm is taken from the outside - either may be shared by many inside the system, but the paradigms are not of the system. It might even be doubted whether the system, the Eastern European social formation, can be said to have generated a coherent "native theory", a paradigm coming from the inside, of, for and by the Eastern European peoples - beyond countless jokes and savoir-faire, even sagesse in how to survive, how to beat the system (for which one has to be a good tactician rather than a good theoretician). One very good account of this is written by an outsider - The Russians, by Hedrick Smith - Die Alternative by Rudolf Bahro (insider to the point of being imprisoned) is probably what comes closest to what we have in mind. But by and large our contention is that this is a formation in search of theory.³

Third, one simple reason why there is no such theory alternative to the two mentioned is that too much is at stake. The regimes have the official doctrine in which they may or may not believe and they may be open for certain parts of liberal criticism, but not for (neo)-marxist criticism since they are marxism in concreto. They are incapable of developing alternative thinking and afraid of permitting that big debate all over Eastern Europe which immediately would lead to a plethora of interesting social thought if Eastern Europeans were permitted to devote their considerable theoretical talents to serious thinking and speaking and writing about their own societies. But the outsiders? Some are marxists wedded to a certain view of history - they will admit weaknesses in the system, but will be limited in their analysis because the basic theoretical structure of marxist thinking will have to be saved. After all, a revolution did take place, means of production were collectivized. This is particularly important to marxists in countries in the capitalist

periphery, the "third world" ruined, exploited by capitalism, fighting its imperialist manifestations as well as the national bourgeoisie used as a bridgehead, fighting for a successor society. Marxism gives some rough outlines of that successor society; to check it against concrete Eastern European reality might lead to cognitive dissonance. And that, in turn, usually leads to a choice between giving up marxist images of post-capitalist societies, and giving up Eastern Europe, (a) by saying it is not socialist, that it never was or that it has backtracked into capitalism, and hence does not constitute a test of marxist theory, (b) by denying the veracity of any other data or theory than what comes from official sources in these countries themselves (or from others who would not challenge any fundamental part of it), (c) simply by refusing to know about it, having an uneasy feeling that exposure would lead to a disagreeable dissonance. Faced with that type of choice it is usually Eastern Europe that is given up, (a), (b), or (c), singly or combined.⁴ But this actually also applies to liberal theory which also defines the correct society and deviations from the normal course of history: to grant reality, something valid to some aspect of the Eastern European social formation would tend to be outside the scope of liberal thinking. Neither, marxist nor liberal thought will grant theoretical autonomy to Eastern Europe and see it as a phenomenon sui generis in need of its own theory. Instead they either incorporate it and see that which does not fit as a deviation, or push it over to the other paradigm - which is tantamount to condemnation. Hence, poor Eastern Europe! People there suffer from many shortcomings and problems, and in addition from lack of images, even of self-images! Is saying so going too far? I doubt it - countless discussions in most Eastern European countries have led me to the conclusion that the images developed are very partial, linked to the social position of the speaker/writer and immediate, often very personal concerns (shared with others in the same or similar positions). The strong appetite for how others see their societies are indicators in the same direction. And, of course, it almost has to be so: these are fragmented, repressive societies often with people sitting like mice in their small holes, peeping out to spy on the cat, seeing their own tiny part of reality, not believing the version given by the roaming cats for a moment. How could they develop other visions? And how can one

develop but fragmentary visions of the future when one does not even have a vision of the present beyond those given by paradigms not well tailored to the specificities of the situation? The following is an effort, not very original, but an honest attempt at understanding.⁵

2. The Eastern European Social Formation: Some Premises About The Basic Goal And About Technocracy, Partocracy And People

My first assumption in trying to develop a vision of Eastern Europe, would be to try to forget about the ideas, ideals, and issues highlighted by the two paradigms and try to cut down, through official rhetoric and anti-rhetoric, to the bone and ask: which are the key processes that seem to be going on? In doing so I would, to start with, not bother too much about differences among the Eastern European countries but simply explore, heuristically, an abstract, average, ideal type Eastern European country, and try to reflect on what I have seen and heard. The outcome is actually very simple, and not very startling.

First, one very basic goal for which the elites and the peoples in general in these socialist countries seem to be working very hard, with an almost single-minded attention, is what one might call the bourgeois way of life (BWL). I define it in terms of four characteristics:

- a non-manual job, away from heavy, dirty, degrading work
- a life in at least modest material comfort, typically with an apartment or a small house, labor-saving devices in the house, radio and TV, a car or at least a motor-cycle.
- a life in family privatism, with the nuclear family as the basic unit of social life
- a sense of security, that this will last till the end of one's life, and also for the life of one's children.

In short, a life away from nature, a life more dominated by the three factors held to be conducive to BWL: urbanization, industrialization and education (and underlying that science and technology). Socialist rhetoric goes in other directions, but this, it is claimed, is what people are working for.

Second, an institution or a nexus, syndrome of institutions growing very rapidly also held to be conducive to BWL for everybody: technocracy with such clear components as (state) bureaucracy, (state) corporations and (state) intelligentsia - the B, C, I-triangle.⁶ The distance between the components is smaller than for the same components in capitalist Europe, but they can be distinguished from each other.

Third, and this is in a sense the most characteristic element: another nexus or syndrome of institutions, guiding and supervising the march forward towards BWL for everybody, as managed by the technocracy: the party and its adjuncts, the machineries for ultimate power, the military and the police. Taken together this triangle may be referred to as the partocracy. The party alone cannot rule, it can only issue directives, perhaps conscientize, mobilize. Wedded to the other two it can rule; indeed.

One point that now should be made immediately is the followings: in pointing to these three basic aspects of the formation we are, in fact, saying that the Eastern European social formation is not that different from other societies around the world, rich or poor, referring to themselves as capitalist or socialist. There is one difference, though, that is positive: at least in the official rhetoric there is the idea of extending BWL to everybody, or at least to equalize access across such discriminators as sex, age, class, ethnic background, race, geography. And the other difference, relative to the social formations in Western Europe (not relative to Southern Europe until recently, though), lies in the relative strength of the partocratic element, its penetration into daily life, till the limits and beyond: the Gulag reality.

One official point here would be that these two differences are not unrelated: in the effort to distribute the fruits of human labor more equally tremendous forces of social reaction are mobilized in favor of the inegalitarian status quo ante. The partocracy is needed to balance and overcome such forces, some from the inside, some from the outside. The counter-point would, equally obviously, be that this cannot be the whole truth for if there is one thing one knows for certain about those who staff partocracy and technocracy then it is that they secure BWL for themselves - even at a very early stage in the shaping

of that formation. For the leading layers of the six components of technocracy/partocracy, these are the elites of these countries - the new class. As usual point and counter-point do not necessarily exclude each other - they may possess simultaneous validity.

One can now go on and formulate the basic logic of the Eastern European social formation (from now on referred to as EESF) in one sentence: it is a formation trying to deliver and secure BUL for as many as possible, by means of partocracy and/or technocracy. Again this comes very close to what most societies are about, so there is evidently a special tonality, a special flavor missing. But that can only be developed through exploration of the details of what has been said so far, not at this very general level.

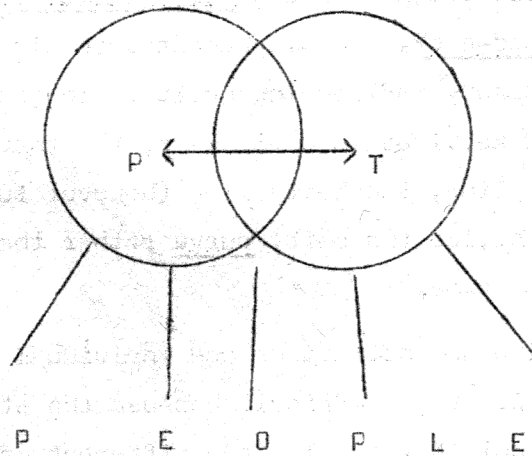
At this level it should be noted that much of the key to EESF is to be found in the relationship between partocracy and technocracy. The relationship is replete with problems and conflicts, and will continue to be so. For one thing, their power base is different. The party possesses ultimate ideological insight and hence normative power - presumably it has the key that can unlock outmoded formations and unleash the productive forces into new levels of production and productivity, in addition to bringing an end to alienated labor. Not automatically though - a revolution and post-revolution demands concerted action. The police/military possess ultimate punitive power that can be unleashed against those who do not follow the precepts of the party, do not participate in that concerted action and particularly those who even work against it - the internal and external enemies. In other words, the partocracy, assuming good coordination between the components, has in its hands tremendous tools of normative and punitive power - and, in fact, a monopoly on either as no competing agents in these two fields are tolerated. A church may operate, but not promulgate concrete social theory and practice - that would be reserved for the party.

The technocracy operates on a different basis. It radiates little or no normative power and possesses no punitive power of its own - its base is remunerative power because, presumably, it can deliver the goods and services - or withhold them. It might even, blaming external factors, withhold it from the partocracy, at the risk of

incurring its wrath. (For that reason the partocracy will probably have its own little private technocracy, to ensure goods and services for itself.)

Most analysts would probably agree that the history of the EESF is the history of a gradual sliding of power from the partocratic to the technocratic base. Concretely this would mean less exhortation and threat punishment, and more focus on the concrete production and even distribution and consumption of goods and services. This is the transition from a view of the social formation as some kind of crusader's camp into a consumer's society where people are less concerned with right and wrong and more concerned with what is of utilitarian value for they themselves and their family.

The basic image of EESF, hence, is that of a people ruled by two intersecting sets of elites, the partocrats and the technocrats.



The figure can be spelt out, naming the six elites again (meaning the top echelons of the organizations) - and subdividing "people" into peasants, workers, intellectuals (as opposed to intelligentsia - an intellectual is one who is always willing and able to question assumptions, including his own, to identify problems, to work on their possible solution). Crossing this categorization is another and very important in the ethnically complex socialist countries: majority/minority. It should also be pointed out that all six elites have ladders reaching down into "people": the low rank, petty bureaucrats, the functionaries, the students, the party members, the policemen, the soldiers. It is possible

to climb on these ladders, it is possible that the military offers the highest probability of getting high up; it is very possible that it helps to climb on more than one ladder at the same time, but not too many - that arises suspicion.

Three simple points can now be made.

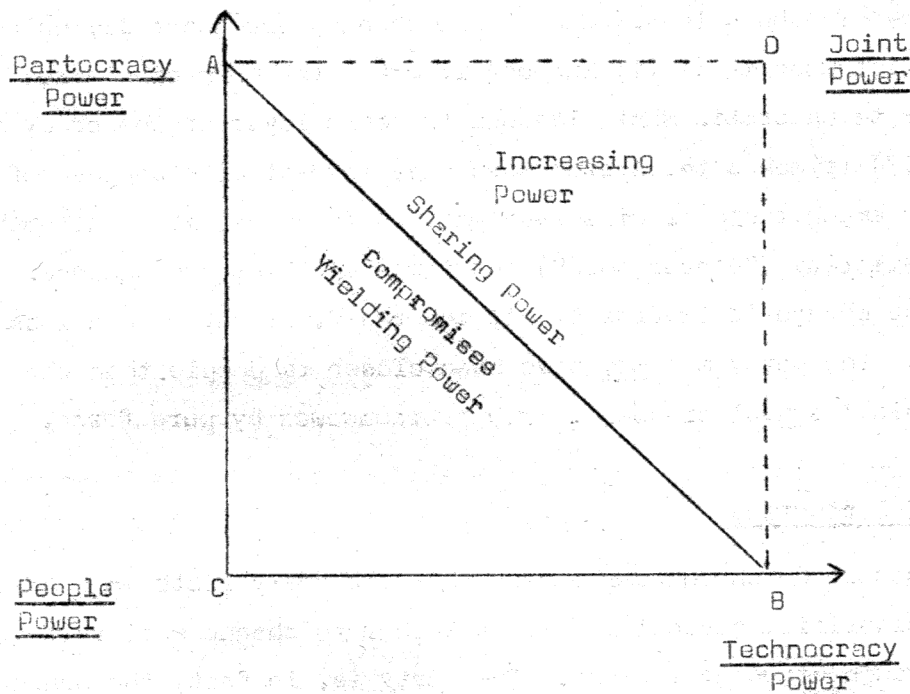
First, the power pressure bearing on the people from partocracy and technocracy singly and/or combined is tremendous. It is based on the normative, remunerative and punitive power mentioned; but also on structural power. The system is very vertical. There is a clear division of labor between those who decide and those who do not. There is a one-way direction of power with P and T conditioning people, giving people little or no opportunity to condition, to penetrate one way or the other, P and T -- for P and T can themselves decide whom among the ladder-climbers to accept into office and when and where. People are marginalized by the system; people are second-class - for the system has few or no cycles, little or no feed-back. People cannot vote with their ballots or with their money, thereby influencing politics in general and the production of goods and services in particular, for there is no choice. Partocracy delivers one line, the party line (however twisting and turning - it should be called the party curve rather than line); technocracy delivers one brand, the brand.

Both collective demonstrations and individual dissent are risky, as is well known; and also very difficult because the structure fragments people, making it difficult for people from different groups to come together; and it segments people, making it difficult for them to develop comprehensive views of social reality. What is left for people to do is to withdraw into social observerism rather than participation. BWL is ideally suited for this. Moreover, this may also be what the elites want, steering people by means of regulated access to BWL rather than by exhortations and threats, presenting a facade where the naive will interpret the quiet surface of withdrawal as a sign of consent or, at least, acquiescence.

Second, a regime has to be able to offer its people something, and two points have already been mentioned: mobility into the elite layers, with guaranteed BWL, and a possibility of BWL or at least some

BWL components for the rest. But what if mobility is slow and for very few only, and the system is inefficient in delivering BWL goods? In that case something else has to be offered, as a minimum, and it is hard to beat the old Roman formula of panem et circenses. The EESF is a welfare state, it guarantees bread - it guarantees minimum level satisfaction of basic human needs - except for the vast prison populations. And it does offer entertainment: sports and arts, abundant and inexpensive. On top of this, on top of familism, careerism and observerism there is also nationalism; appeals to older, more basic and more reliable values than those primarily promulgated by the partocracy. And yet, in spite of all of this, so many people still leave, try to leave, seem to want to leave ---

Third, the relationship between P and T. As indicated it is filled with contradictions because they correspond to two different modes of politics, with the former waning, the latter waxing in power. In a conflict diagram it looks like this:



At A all power rests with partocracy, at B all power with technocracy, on the line from A to B they find compromises so that their total power is constant, in the triangle towards D they increase their total power, in the triangle towards C they yield, reducing their total power - to the people.

Hence, if we start at A there are many possibilities. But the process never started completely at A; Lenin himself promoted the formula.

Communism = Soviets + Electricity

which is a clear P + T formula. To this technocracy might add:

Communism = Soviets + Electricity + Computers - Soviets

which would be an equally clear, pure technocracy formula. Countless are the conflicts on the way sliding down the A-B line. Evidently the technocrat, to promote his institution in general, and himself in particular, joins the party. And equally obviously, the partocrat, to guarantee himself against a fall down to the level of the people should he fall out of grace, will try to get some technocratic training to have something to fall back upon in foul weather. Thus, they may become more similar and they may also join forces and increase their joint power.

Hence, under no circumstance should the relative decline of partocracy on the power firmament be seen as a gain for the power of the people. It may also be a loss. When these changes are generally welcomed in the capitalist West it is (1) because it makes the formation more similar to the technocratic West although the thin layer of democracy is missing, and (2) it makes the system more easy to deal with because of the similarity among technocracies everywhere. In short, it means both increasing similarity ("convergence") and increasing interdependence. But even if the change is towards B, not towards D, it may mean a loss for democracy: the party man may have been closer to people than the business/technical school graduate, only overshadowed by pure force.

3. Aspects Of Partocracy

It cannot be enough emphasized that the party rests on a basis held to the scientific, a secular insight in how to change society to the better through structural means. The party is, in fact, the manager of a giant social experiment, knowing what are the independent variables, what to do with them, what are the effects to be expected on the dependent variables (production, productivity, de-alienation, for instance); what are the possible "third variables" that might disturb the experiment and hence should be controlled. According to the doctrine the social formation can be controlled in its essentials from a core, a basis of key

factors, the forces of production. From that core causation will radiate outwards to the outer layers of the social formation, the superstructure. This delicate, exceedingly difficult operation that will bring about transitions from capitalist to socialist and from socialist to communist formations is brought about through a similar, isomorphic, division of the members of the society: a core consisting of the party (and a core of the core consisting of its leadership) who better than others understand the nature of the social experiment), and a vast periphery who will benefit from the impact of the experiment but whose task it is also not to disturb it. A consequence of this is that the basic structure of EESF, as described in the preceding section, is theoretically correct: its verticality is instrumental, even necessary according to theory at least "at the present stage in history", to carry through the experiment.

Thus, there is a high level of causal centralism in the correct image of the social formation, and political centralism (euphemism: "democratic centralism") in the correct image of the relations between its members. There is an isomorphism in the sense that those in the center of the political formation also are those whose task it is to handle the center core of the social formation in the experiment; those in the political periphery will be on the effect side rather than on the causal side. But this means that the party, the instrumental link between the political and the social formations, has a historical task and hence has to have members capable of living up to this historical responsibility.

No doubt there is a difference here between the membership profile of the small, fighting party and the big, institutionalized party - probably not very different from the difference between a guerilla group and a conventional army, or between a sect and a church, in general. More concretely,

	<u>The small fighting party</u>	<u>The big institutionalized party</u>
<u>Background</u>	Proletarian, intelligentsia	partocracy, technocracy
<u>Training</u>	little, experience	some technical education
<u>Attitude</u>	strong believer, solidarity	weak believer, loyalty

The difference between solidarity and loyalty is important here: solidarity is horizontal, with comrades; loyalty is vertical, with the leadership. Either may imply sacrifice, loyalty also sacrifice of own identity. It means accepting the twists and turns of the party line, at least at the overt level - it means hiding mental protests as silent, whispered reservations - to oneself and at most, to the nearest circle. In so doing it may also mean the negation of solidarity with one's equals who all may feel like protesting, but all let loyalty take priority over solidarity; because they are the structural victims of fragmentation and segmentation.

What this means is that the institutionalized party in the EESF of today would have as its members people characterized by having a partocratic and/or technocratic background, some technical education, and much loyalty. They would tend to be careerists, using party membership to climb in technocracy - perhaps including the police and military branches (that may also increasingly take on technocratic characteristics). They would be tested by their loyalty, and in their background at least one parent (later it will be a grandparent) should be a proletarian. In short: The New Class.

The theocratic aspect of partocracy. To have a secular doctrine such as marxism-leninism as the official doctrine of the state has a very important consequence: that the head of state (or the unofficial head of state, the party secretary-general if the two are different persons which they often are not) becomes the leading marxist-leninist in the country. In countries with a sacred doctrine such as Islam or Judaism (there are not that many theocratic states) this role will be held by a sacred person, a priest, a theologian - sometimes not in the country. If there is some separation between sacred and secular powers this offers some leeway of interpretation. But in a state based on marxism-leninism as the official doctrine one not only cannot outmarx Marx, one cannot outmarx the head of state either. If we now assume that the head of state did not do much to penetrate more deeply into the theoretical aspects of marxism-leninism after the age of, say, 25, if for no other reason because he was busy with other matters, the consequence is that he stays at a relatively primitive level of theoretical marxist insight - probably the level often referred to as "vulgar" or "orthodox". And this, in turn, means that those who try to be creative within marxism, try to adapt it to changing conditions, using it as an approach, a method, even as a heuristic more than as an infallible set of dogma, will have to proceed very carefully.

They cannot come forward saying they have made discoveries not made by the head of state, or by the head of state in the leading country. They at least have to genuflect and try to subsume their discoveries under some tautological quotations from that head of state. The likelihood is that this procedure will take the brunt off any new insight and make it bland. The alternatives would be to go ahead and take the punishment when the other aspects of partocracy are invoked - or to keep silent. And that is what most would do; reducing debate, the oxygen of any social formation, to a tiny trickle.

The gerontocratic aspect of partocracy. With the absence of institutionalized elections with a high probability of changes in the power elite, the top leadership will probably be quite old, for at least two reasons. One is that if they manage to remain in power,

and have good health, they simply become old. Another would be that they will have to wait a long time for a chance to come, and will have to be tested for their loyalty over a long period, in competition with others. The young Turk who suddenly swings into power, or the whiz kid, would be an unlikely phenomenon.

An important consequence of this, in a formation where the future calendar has no guaranteed date for a possible change in the power elite, and even a possible change in political course, would be the focus on the health of the person in charge. Politics happens through illness and death in a system that has no other institutionalized way of making the change, or by internal power struggle. The people will try to get insight into either, judging the symptoms of power struggle and the symptoms of disease with the same eagerness. Leaving aside the former it can even be stated that many people become amateur physicians, specializing in the disease the man-on-the-top presumably is suffering from. And the question "After Mr. X - what?" (rather than who) becomes the topic around which most political conversation would focus; the younger and healthier, the less politics will be discussed. Exaggerated expectations are likely to ensue from this, and a highly actor-oriented perspective on the politics of EEST, very short on structural analysis because of this often very misleading focus (which is also the focus of the foreign journalist and commentator - for the reasons mentioned in the introduction: the absence of theory).

The mediocratic aspect of partocracy. The party is the harbinger of ideas and ideals, hence it will have to be judged in terms of its ability to maintain ideas and ideals **worth preserving and develop** them further - and there are many of those in marxism-leninism. But can that be done with the type of membership the party is likely to have, given the membership pattern and the theocratic and gerontocratic pattern? Keeping in mind that the leaders will have to work themselves up, and for that reason originally were not that different from the rank and file members - more push, sharper elbows, more charisma perhaps - but will they develop more ability to create ideas and ideals? To this it may be objected that their task is to be doers, to implement rather than to be thinkers - but that is not all together correct. There is the

technocracy for that purpose. Their function is to guide, to be what is written in the countless slogans and all those banners - the guiding star/light, etc.

A person whose major characteristic is loyalty to party leadership and at the same time training in keeping a low horizon, below the water mark set by the head of state, is almost bound either to be or to become mediocre. In this many will find an elitist underlying assumption, but this is not the case. The negation of mediocrity is not an elitist aristocracy of the intellectually strong, but a society where people do not fear to speak their mind out of loyalty to the leadership or fear of outshining, in any sense, the current head of state. The advantage of democracies in the Western European sense is easily seen in this: the debate goes on, all the time; there may be loyalty within a party but then there are several parties, and nobody would ever dream of seeing the head of state as the harbinger of truth in any sense. He/she is seen as an executive and evaluated as such, and a nothing more; there is never a question of keeping below any water mark - one does not even know what it is.

The Big Question: What happens when prophecy fails? If the party is in possession of a basic insight formulated as a social experiment, then it is in a risky position: it is, in fact, making a prophecy. Certain things are going to happen provided that certain things are done. There is no problem with a prophecy if it is transcendental or for a distant or dimly defined future, like Christianity - it is much more problematic with marxism where the prediction is relatively clearly located and defined in social time. That is the basic problem of the party, and the basic reason, in my view, why partocracy is on the decline.

There are many ways of formulating what that prophecy was about, but let us say the basic idea was that as a result of overcoming the contradiction between labour and capital, between means and modes of production through the abolition of the private ownership of means of production in general, productivity and creativity would go up; there would be production for needs and for those most in need rather

than for demand, alienation would go down and creativity up, and the state would tend to wither away and the classes disappear. I think it is quite clear that one of these predictions has not come out badly at all: there has been production for needs and for those most in need, abject misery has by and large been abolished or made very rare, and all of this is in a relatively short span of time. Historically this is no minor achievement, for those concerned a major fact, a new life.

But the other parts of general prophecy have not come out so well, particularly the parts relating to productivity and creativity and changes of social structure in a more fundamental way. Surplus has at least partially been spent in such a way as to alleviate and abolish misery, but the structure capable of doing this has not been that different from the structure of the preceeding social formation. There is a new class, the state is there, and so on.

Given this there is the problem of how to react when prophecy fails, and the general answer is clear: by denying that the experiment failed, by denying that it took place at all, or by denying that it took place under the proper conditions. We shall look at all three.

Denying that the experiment failed. This is positive propaganda, painting a positive picture of social reality. It can take many forms. One is to focus on the achievements that did take place, which means limiting the spectrum of dependent variables, and concentrate on the positive points. In the mind of the present author there are two undeniable clusters very much worthy of being emphasized:

- the abolition of misery (as already mentioned) the satisfaction of the basic material needs for those most in need (with a question mark on what happens afterwards)
- the support given to liberation movements from periphery capitalism and colonialism (putting a question mark on what happens afterwards)

The problem, however, is that victories of the past cannot be enjoyed for too long; there are rapidly diminishing returns in propaganda grow stale. New victories have to appear, new battles fought and won; one additional reason for stepped up activity in the Third World.

Next, turning it into a tautology by declaring everything in a socialist country to be socialism, by definition: since the social formation is socialist what is inside it is also socialist - for instance the educational system. The state apparatus is socialist and the state of the capitalist formation has "withered away" by definition because the formation is no longer capitalist. And then, on top of this, there is always the possibility of simply lying, claiming credit for things that did not happen, or confusing plans with facts, intentions with achievements.

Denying that the experiment has taken place. This is a more sophisticated approach and perhaps more used by outsiders, foreigners - for to deny that there was a socialist revolution, in the Soviet Union particularly, is to deny the basic social myth. As an argument it takes three different forms:

- conditions were not ripe, the preceding social formation was not a mature capitalist society but a poor, feudal/precapitalist one, with little experience with industrialism, a backward, uneducated peasant population, etc.⁷
- conditions were ripe but what took place was not a real revolution; means of production were deprivatized but they were not collectivized in the sense of really being owned by the people, they were run by bureaucrats, etc.
- conditions were ripe, what took place was a real revolution, but it takes more time for the results to show up fully; social processes are not that quick, more time has to pass before we can judge it.

Invoking adverse conditions. Here the point would be that the experiment took place and would have succeeded if it had not been for relevant conditions that had a highly negative effect. These conditions, then, enter after the revolution - that is what makes this type of argument different from the preceding cluster. The list for this type of negative apologetic propaganda is long: the inter-⁽⁵⁾ventionist wars, the losses incurred under stalinism (one of Stalin's new tasks becomes that of filling this epistemological gap!), the terrible losses during the Second World War, the climatic conditions that so often are "below average", etc. No doubt there is truth to

much of this, the problem is for how long one can draw on the misfortunes of the past - how long is the shadow cast by them? Also, one never hears about the relevant conditions that had a positive effect; the idea being that all that is positive is intrinsic due to deliberate efforts by the party and the people, all that is negative comes from the outside and is extrinsic. This also applies to the major category of negative conditions: the saboteur, external or internal. As time from major social catastrophes such as wars elapses, as climate improves but the positive social effects still do not show up, saboteurs are needed - they have a concrete epistemological function to play.⁸ It is not the saboteurs that produce the failures; it is the failures that produce the saboteurs! Hence it is in the interest of the people to be co-operative with the regime, for the better the achievements the lower the need for scapegoats and the probability of becoming one.

The point now would be that propaganda has much to play on: there are many variations of these themes, with the basic thought structure easily recognized. For the basic point is to save the theory - and the legitimation of the power of the party rests on the theory. With the theory disconfirmed, with no satisfactory way of explaining why prophecy fails, the power of the party becomes very naked, and very, very wicked.

It should be noted how much more problematic this situation is for a system resting on secular than on sacred theory: the latter will always have a transcendental part of the theory that cannot be proved, but it cannot be disproved either - it is untestable. We have indicated above two ways of trying also to make a secular theory untestable, or unfalsifiable, (1) by turning it into a tautology, (2) by extending the time horizon for the test indefinitely. Neither effort is likely to have much convincing power: the former is too much of an insult to the intelligence of the propaganda target; the latter too cruel because of the clear implication: the sacrifice of generations for an uncertain future.

And that raises the more general question: does propaganda along the lines indicated work in the sense that it is believed in

and helps solve not only the problem of the party but problems that people in general have? Probably not. The most likely effect is that it instills a sense of deep fatigue in those who still read or listen; and beyond that a fatigue in connection with anything that has to do with marxism. It is, in fact, very difficult to find in Eastern Europe anybody interested in marxist theory and not only for the reasons mentioned under the headings of theocracy and mediocracy, but also because it all becomes wrapped up in a hopeless tangle of efforts to reconcile theory with data across vast gaps of irreconcilability. In addition marxism is also a school subject which adds still more to the fatigue effect, it works like drizzling a layer of dust over the entire theoretical edifice.

On repression and the reactions to it. The description given here of the partocracy as theocratic (or ideocratic), gerontocratic and mediocratic - and very far from democratic, aristocratic or even meritocratic - makes it obvious why it has to be repressive. It cannot in the long run invoke a credo quia absurdum dictum when the failure of the prophecy to come true is there for everybody to see. The obvious consequence, beyond positive and negative propaganda would be to stifle any criticism and use the power machinery to retain monopolistic ideological/normative power - and this is, of course, what happens. As the party above all is about ideas and norms, about theories and data, the pressure would be on others who also produce ideas and norms, theories and data to conform or at least shut up, or else.

Or else: they will be turned into non-persons, and here there is a range of possibilities - the production of non-persons being a specialty of the system. From what has been said it follows that one first has to be a person, and the person the regime would be most afraid of would be the intellectual. The system in general and the partocracy in particular is highly anti-intellectual. By all intellectual, then, is meant somebody quite different from members of the intelligentsia mentioned above as a component in the technocratic BCI-complex; the latter are specialists, experts, even servants inside that complex. They do not exercise the trademark of the intellectual: the autonomy, the integrity protected by what is often known as "academic freedom",

not selling one's work product to anybody else but retaining control over its production as well as over the product; and, as the price paid for this privilege, the relentless questioning of assumptions, including one's own and those of one's pay-masters, the identification of problems and their possible solutions. For this to happen the intellectual does not have to have a diploma; maybe the diploma predisposes more for jobs in the intelligentsia than for work as an intellectual. In general, however, those who deviate with their minds will tend to be educated. And, curiously enough, much strain but also a safety-valve is brought into the EESF by the fact that these societies all offer a niche right at the top of the intellectual pyramid relatively well protected in terms of academic freedom: not the universities (they are factories for production of intelligentsia) but the academies of science.⁹

How does one create a non-person out of an intellectual?

Here is a scale of possibilities:

- (1) By depriving the person of the right to teach (to "poison the youth") while retaining salary and right to do research and to publish.
- (2) By depriving the person of the right to be read, by students, by being removed from reading lists, from open shelves in libraries, from bookshops, etc.
- (3) By depriving the person of the right to publish.
- (4) By depriving the person of the right to speak at meetings, conferences etc., at least not in the presence of students.
- (5) By depriving the person of access to the means of intellectual production: libraries, adequate working conditions, etc.
- (6) By depriving the person of a salary - forcing him or her into a very precarious existence, or manual work (which then may become a two-edged sword because it gives the intellectual first hand knowledge of the conditions of the working classes).¹⁰
- (7) By leaving the person with no alternative but emigration, external exile (with an exit tax), - which may have been what

the person wanted anyhow - thereby becoming a non-person relative to the system as he/she will never be (except in the way appropriate for non-persons) mentioned inside the system.

- (8) By the method of internal exile, to distant, peripheral and marginalized parts of the country where at least some of the conditions for functioning as an intellectual are absent: he/she may produce, but then there is nobody to address it to, access to sources, to discussions with others, etc.
- (9) By imprisonment, forced labor camps etc., combined with uncertainty as to where the person is, physically speaking, keeping contact even with family to a very low minimum.
- (10) By execution - the ultimate production of a non-person; although he/she may become more problematic after than before death, through the power of written or spoken words.

This is not the place to dwell on repression except to point out that the partocratic regimes in the EESF have moved from the higher towards the lower rungs, and expanded the spectrum at that end. It is the normal, less extreme workings of the EESF that are of interest here, not the excesses of stalinist terror.¹²

NOTES

* Originally given April 1977 as my final lecture at the Inter-University Centre, Dubrovnik, after four years as the first Director-General of that institution - itself an example of the importance of fighting unrelentlessly for human rights in general and academic freedom in particular (there was an effort to bar all Yugoslav "dissidents" from giving lectures at this transnational institution, and when that did not work later on an effort to deny them access to Yugoslav students). The present version was given as a lecture at the School of Comparative Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, September 1979; and is also intended as an input to the Goals, Processes and Indicators of Development Project of the United Nations University - in its search for goals and processes of development in contemporary societies.

1. The term socialist is used here, without any qualification. I do not refer to these countries as "socialist", or as "state capitalist", for the simple reason that they refer to themselves as socialist, just as Western European and North American countries sometimes refer to themselves, as capitalist or admit that this is a correct designation. There is a concept of idealized socialism which Eastern European countries do not live up to, not even in the eyes of their leaders - when these leaders are honest to themselves. Maybe "state capitalism", "statism", "etatism" is a more analytically accurate term; but it is not the one used by these countries themselves. One may also prefer to save the idealized version of socialism by referring to the Eastern European social formation as "socialism". But then this can also be said about capitalism: there is an idealized version of capitalism, described to some extent by Adam Smith, without monopolies/oligopolies, with perfectly functioning markets, with equilibria built around reliable systems of checks and balances that the Western European countries do not live up to, and since I do not want to judge the latter by its manifestation and the former (socialism) by its intention, I shall prefer to deal with the two systems symmetrically, also at the terminological level.

2. Since political jokes is a major form of presentation of social analysis in Eastern Europe this one (from Rumania) is fairly representative and to the point (it is actually a meta-joke!):

Brezhnev is visiting Bucuresti, touring the city with Ceausescu in an open car. Everywhere people are not only greeting them, but they are smiling, laughing, looking happy. Brezhnev says to Ceausescu:

- Nicolae, I understand nothing of this. That you are able to order people out of offices and factories to greet me, that is like at home. But they smile, laugh, and look so happy - we never manage that. In Moscow they always look sour. How come?

- But Leonid, that is no problem, it is all due to comrade Abraham!
- Comrade Abraham? Never heard of him!
- He is the one who makes jokes in my country. He has an office next to mine, he makes at least one per day, often about me, against me - I get them first, I love them - and we circulate them among the people. Right now they have heard the joke of the day, that is why they look so happy.
- Nicolae, I must borrow him. Right now!
- Leonid, my best of friends: he is yours from tomorrow, of course on a per diem basis.

The next day Comrade Abraham departs for Moscow, lands at Sheremetyevo, is very well received, is driven in a black ZIL to the Kremlin, there is a red carpet, at the end of the steps stands Brezhnev.

- Comrade Abraham, you are most cordially welcomed to join us in our great struggle forwards, towards the victory of communism. Your work will start tomorrow. However, before you start there is an important point I want to make. Your experience so far is from Rumania, which is a country in the transition from capitalism to socialism. Our country, however, the Soviet Union, the Fatherland of the Great October Revolution, is at a higher state of development, in the transition from socialism to communism. Maybe your jokes could reflect this important difference.
 - Comrade Brezhnev, was it you or I who should make the jokes?
3. There is Solzhenitsyn, who has a vision of a pre-Peter the Great, rodina, mir Russia, then a long history of Westernization that also includes Russia after the revolution, up to the present technocratically oriented regime, and a future vision of a Russia finding its roots. This should be taken seriously because there is a vision here; but shared by how many?
 4. In the experience of the present author this is particularly the case for Latin American intellectuals, and not only because of the desperate need for an adequate successor society to the deformed, developed societies, ruled by oppressive oligarchies, found in the continent - with a few exceptions. There is also another reason more linked to the intellectual style predominant in Latin America: highly theoretical, consistency-oriented, often dogmatic, not empirical except in the criticism of the present formation. Also, being Westerners Eastern Europe is closer, more relevant than for Africans and Asians who will have less difficulty creating a mental distance between themselves and Eastern Europe.

5. The effort is based on extensive travel in all Eastern European countries (with the exception of Albania) - including sixteen visits to the Soviet Union - and work in one of them, the softest, Yugoslavia for about one year over a period of four years; everywhere discussing extensively with all kinds of people. My sources are too many to be mentioned, and for obvious reasons difficult to thank openly. This in itself is one of the techniques used by the system: as it is forbidden to collect non-official data, and informants cannot be mentioned, "objective" studies become very limited, e.g. to content analysis of official publication, including newspapers. Hence, studies will have a ring of the "subjective" and can easily be rejected by the regimes invoking what they do not necessarily practice themselves, the canons of empirical social science research, well knowing that it is impossible to practice them. It is interesting to note, in this connection, how Soviet dissidents tend to make a virtue out of this situation by often presenting their analysis in the form of fiction, novels, short stories.
6. For more on this, see Johan Galtung, "On Alpha and Beta and Their Many Combinations", Proceedings, Visions of Desirable Societies sub-project of the GPID Project, Mexico, April 1978.
7. One basic difficulty with this argument hinges on Czechoslovakia: no doubt a more "advanced" country in the sense indicated, hence a country whose socialism should be much more "successful". It does not seem to have been; one possible reason for the extreme anger directed against the Czech "betrayal" of socialism in 1968 - as seen by the partocrats, and to some extent the technocrats (but the latter probably had their hidden sympathy with the spring of Prague) in the other countries, those that were more "backward" when socialism struck. Later they may understand that the Prague spring perhaps was that more advanced socialism only not brought about by partocracy and technocracy and hence not right.
8. A good illustration is offered by the following story I heard from a high party member in a country bordering on the Soviet Union, about a small village in the countryside in the Soviet Union that had been (forcefully) collectivized in the 1930s, and a machine-tractor-station had been established. Production and productivity instead of going up, however, went down - and the creative forces of the masses did not seem to have been released. What to do? One night the eager local party secretary went out and poured sand in the tractor engine - next day it broke down. The tractor was sacrificed to save the theory, for sabotage could now be invoked.
9. This is one reason why Academician Sakharov can keep going, the second being the incredible stamina of that man - although mainly directed to support intellectuals in their fight for intellectual and other freedoms, not the rest of the population in its fights for freedom, against exploitation, etc. Not much radicalism and courage are recruited into the academies of science, though.

10. A good example is the Hungarian case of Miklos Haraszi and his book on the piece rate system in the Hungarian Red Star factory.
11. This is also a characteristic of the softest of the Eastern European countries, Yugoslavia (and, perhaps, Hungary). The moves against the Praxis group and the philosophers in Beograd (the Beograd 8) were typically of the rung 1-4 variety - their teaching activity at the transnational Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik creating difficulties - no doubt in Yugoslavia, but was it also of Yugoslavia? At the time of writing (1979), it looks as if the struggle has been won: they can teach, and they are getting Yugoslav students again, after some years, at the IUC.
12. Another personal experience: an outsider can also be made into a non-person, or there can be attempts in that direction. After giving a paper on "Social Imperialism" at the Seventh World Congress of the International Sociological Association in Toronto, August 1974 the present author was pressured by members of the Soviet delegation to stop that kind of thing:

"You are totally alone in this. Nobody believes you".
"You will run your head against the wall, our forces are stronger!"
"What you say is emotional, subjective, political, not research at all".
"We have your book translated but shall not publish it".
"We shall not invite you to the Soviet Union - you could have had a good time on honoraria for your book".

This list was written down immediately afterwards. As can be noticed there is not the slightest effort to enter into an intellectual argument.